

FAA Center for Management Development Training

Essential to Future Growth, Effectiveness, and Efficiency

By Pat Coley Ford

Florida is renowned internationally for year-round sun, fun, beaches, and even Mickey Mouse. Rising above the shadow of the Mouse is another international institution, the Federal Aviation Administration's Center for Management Development (CMD), located in Palm Coast, FL. CMD provides management and leadership training to FAA managers, supervisors, and leaders.

Training is essential to the growth, effectiveness, and efficiency of the FAA's future. Administrator Marion Blakey includes "Organizational Excellence" as a goal in the 2004–2008 Flight Plan. This goal states that the success of the FAA's mission will be through stronger leadership, a **better-trained workforce**, enhanced cost-control measures, and improved decision making, based on reliable data.

Air Traffic Organization (ATO) COO, Russ Chew, says that training and investing in his employees is essential as the ATO redefines its very nature as a service-based organization. "I am committed to helping my senior executives succeed in their new roles with new training and tools...if we don't invest in our employees, we will fail to produce value in the long run. We will sacrifice our future, the future of our customers, and the future of our industry." (*Excerpt from an Aero Club speech, Washington, DC, November 25, 2003.*)

Overview

In October 1987, CMD replaced the FAA's Lawton, OK Management Training School, in operation since 1971. Since that time, CMD has been

a focal point of communication and training for managers, supervisors, team leads, project leads, and support staff personnel. Here they learn the Agency's goals and initiatives and how to implement them.

Some of the most-requested courses include: *Leadership Development Program, Phases I and II; Labor Management Relations; Strategic Planning; Systems Thinking; Facilitator Training; Influence, Inquiry, and Implications; and Managing Change.*

Approximately sixty percent of CMD training is done in the field to accommodate the Agency and budget constraints. CMD also offers training specialized to the unique needs of lines of businesses, facilities, intact workgroups, and other government agencies.

"Symposium Workshops" are a particularly popular initiative. Offered at both CMD and field locations, the Symposium is a series of modules extracted from effective core curriculum training focusing on personal and organizational just-in-time development needs.

Course Development is an Ongoing Effort

From concept to implementation, CMD faculty members ensure that

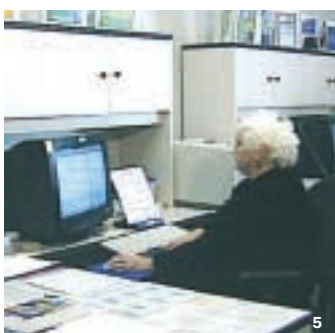
courses relate to the FAA competencies needed by supervisors and managers to optimize their contribution to the organization. Courses are prototyped before representative target audiences. Feedback is considered, and modifications are made.

CMD is accredited by the Council on Occupational Education (COE). Nearly every CMD offering also is reviewed by the American Council on Education (ACE) and is recommended for college credit.

All of this does not take place in a vacuum. Dr. Roberta Sappington, CMD Program Manager for Instructional Services, credits much of the Center's success to the leadership experience that the instructors bring to CMD.

"I work with the instructors on all CMD training. This entails thoroughly understanding the training need, determining the most appropriate delivery medium, and working with the instructors to design and implement the product. It also involves using the Evaluations Department and its data for continuous improvement."

"I need to have my hand on the pulse of FAA initiatives and work to support their implementation. This includes facility consolidation, personnel reform,



and the transition to FPPS, the new personnel information system,” said Roberta.

“The most rewarding thing about my job is contributing to others’ growth and thus helping achieve the Agency’s mission.” Roberta also noted that she has benchmarked numerous organization leadership development programs and schools. “I’ve found none with anything better to offer than CMD—not at any price.”

A Seamless Organization

CMD is a full service, composite organization comprised of five contractors. It’s proof that diverse organizations can work seamlessly. “We make a great case study for how a system works within a system,” said Sid McGuirk, Acting Director of CMD. “Just as it is taught in our *Systems Thinking* course, we model how each system or contractor has a direct impact on the rest of the system. That permits us to provide the best quality training and service available to FAA managers and supervisors.”

Logistics: “The Logistics Department is responsible for student notification (transportation, class instructions, and room registration) to all attendees; classroom supplies; copying and assembly of classroom materials; shipping and receiving; reproduction; procurement of supplies; and government equipment inventory services. Additionally we are here to support all fee-for-service activities and customers,” stated Kathy Kurcin, Director of Logistics.

Publications: The Publications Department is responsible for the presentation and quality of CMD’s partici-

pant and instructor guides. The staff excels in print production, graphic design, and electronic presentation for training media, allowing them to incorporate a multi-media approach to enhance instructional concepts.

In addition, the Department provides expertise in web-based knowledge hubs, closed-captioning for video products, and training supplements to both video and audio products.

FAA Productions Florida: Many current commercial and training videos are produced at *FAA Productions Florida* at CMD under John McCloskey, Director of Media Productions.

“In addition to supporting the outdoor learning at CMD by videotaping challenge course activities, we provide a wide range of other services. For example, *FAA Productions Florida* at CMD is a script-to-screen multimedia group supporting all FAA and DOT lines of business, and other U.S. Government customers. Our award-winning team of creative professionals provides dynamic multimedia solutions that are consistently on target, on time, and on budget.”

When asked specifically about the scope of services, Mr. McCloskey observed that “Training, marketing, brand imaging, public affairs, and regional and corporate media communications: it’s what we do. We’re uniquely familiar with the FAA’s strategic goals, operational challenges, and expected outcomes. *FAA Productions Florida* utilizes the latest digital technology to produce high-impact, broadcast quality results.”

Library Resource Center: CMD’s small, well-stocked Library Resource

PHOTOS LEFT TO RIGHT: 1 & 2) Center For Management Development facility in Palm Coast, FL offers spacious views of its wooded setting through generous use of windows in its classroom wings. 3) CMD’s course content is designed to build practical, relevant, and immediately useful workplace skills. Classrooms are equipped with overhead projection, directly linked to video and computer output. 4) Case studies, lecturettes, small group discussions, and skill practices are but a few of the techniques used. Instructors foster an environment of open communication to encourage expression of workplace concerns. 5) Full-range publications support is available in the production of course and meeting documents and innovative graphic designs for print and electronic media.

Center is in a class by itself. It’s a special library for targeted collections and reference materials. The Students often cite Resident Librarian Shirley Townsend as one of the most valuable assets CMD has for facilitating their learning experience.

Evaluation is Intensive

CMD conducts an intensive evaluation program, soliciting feedback from all course participants and visitors. Whether received on formal rating sheets, notes of comments, or unsolicited written communications, all input is carefully recorded and analyzed by the Evaluations staff.

Recommendations are developed and acted upon, and changes are initiated. “The Evaluations staff’s primary responsibility is to conduct end-of-course evaluations and follow-up evaluations. At the conclusion of each class a report is prepared showing how the class participants rated their satisfaction with the course and the instruction, and summarizing recommendations for course



PHOTOS LEFT TO RIGHT: 6) CMD's video production team offers services in concept design, production development, script writing, videotaping, post-production editing, and computer animation graphics. 7) CMD's Resource Center houses an extensive collection of books, audiotapes, and videotapes as well as a large selection of reference materials. 8) Getting to know the CMD staff, subject matter experts, and other training participants is an integral part of the learning process. 9) The CMD Collaborative Technology facility (CoLab), equipped with 24 workstations, features GroupSystems electronic meeting support software that allows groups to rapidly generate and organize ideas and produce documents. 10) CMD is available as a downlink site for Interactive Video Technology (IVT) programs that link participants to other groups in the Agency.

improvements," stated Carol Welsh, Director of Evaluations.

Follow-up evaluation surveys also solicit recommendations for improving the courses, enabling the Evaluations staff to track trends, to determine if the courses are relevant to the workplace.

Over 73,000 Trained at CMD

Monica Murphy, with Contracts and Administration, says that CMD has trained over 73,000 students since opening. "To do our jobs well, we must be cost effective and efficient. In recognition of Administrator Blakey's and Chief Operations Officer Russ Chew's position on performance and budget integration, we are a genuine cost effective resource to the FAA."

"Compared to other training institutions, universities, and management schools, the FAA gets the best return for the training dollar at CMD. As a bonus we are located in Florida. The FAA will not find a better training

experience or a better price anywhere in the country."

"We conduct extensive research on the training industry to insure that we are priced well inside of the market standard," states Mary Voy, who directs product development. "My job is to ensure the integrity of our courses, make sure that we are consistently on the cutting edge of training methodologies, and confirm that our courses meet standards for American Council on Education credit recommendations. Beyond that, our instructional products must be delivered to CMD customers at or ahead of schedule and within cost constraints. Above all else, they must satisfy the customer's documented needs."

CMD Invests in Supporting Staff Skills

CMD invests approximately 3,000 hours each year in maintaining the skills of its staff using planned training events. Knowledge gained at these events benefits the organization as a whole and helps enhance CMD's reputation as a state-of-the-art training facility for government agencies.

M.J. Harris, who heads Instruction and Staff Development, says her role is

to ensure that CMD's faculty achieve and maintain certification in the courses that they teach and that they take advantage of shadowing opportunities at FAA facilities. M.J. also is responsible for ensuring that instructors receive additional training through outside workshops, conferences, and networking opportunities.

"Based on an annual plan focused on CMD's needs, instructors and staff may attend conferences of one to four days, bringing back information to share with the entire staff," stated MJ. "Contractually mandated training also is a part of professional development, such as CPR/first aid, challenge course certification, and facilitation training."

CMD Instructors are Special People

Recognizing that you become effective by being selective, CMD recruits nationwide to find uniquely qualified individuals to design, develop, and deliver CMD's five-star courses. Instructors' backgrounds and qualifications vary greatly, but all meet specific CMD needs.

Dr. Bob Sobel, for example, has a social psychology Ph.D. and taught and conducted research for fifteen years

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—STEVE BAKER, FAA Managers Association Vice President

Satisfied CMD Customers Speak...

Chuck Saunders, Headquarters, Manager, Air Traffic Training Division, ATX-100, notes that the Division is responsible for providing all technical, managerial, supervisory and other training to all AT personnel. To be more effective in his job, he recently attended *Measuring Organizational Performance*.

"There are two areas of benefits I personally see as a result of my CMD training. The first is the technical knowledge gained that readily transferred to my job."

"The *Measuring Organizational Performance* course gave me valuable insight into defining performance goals, which I am putting to use as we transition to the ATO. The second benefit I receive is being able to meet FAA employees from across the nation and, more importantly, across the lines of business."

Chuck continued his accolades and appreciation for CMD. "The learning atmosphere created at CMD is ideal for discussing the many issues we all face back at the office. The networking is outstanding and carries back to the office after the class has ended."

"It always impresses me that many of the contract instructors have a more complete understanding of FAA issues than some FAA employees."

Steve Baker, Military Operations Specialist, ACE-530 in Kansas City, MO recently attended CMD for the *Influence, Inquiry and Implications* course. Steve stated that the content of the course was on target and full of useful information.

"The course reinforced knowledge and introduced new ideas." When asked if he would recommend CMD to his colleagues, Mr. Baker was quick to respond. "Together with Mike Monroney Aeronautical Center (MMAC), CMD is one of the last opportunities available for interactive, live training. CMD is a natural fit for the training needs of today and for the future. As the FAA reaches for new tomorrows, innovative and timely training is a cornerstone of success."

"At the FAA Managers Association, we continue to explore ways to incorporate CMD's instructors into our organization as members and into our conferences as teachers. They possess a wealth of information and are an under-used resource."

Denny White, Operating Supervisor, Sanford Towers, Sanford, FL, recently attended the *CMD Facilitator Training* course. "I'm on a two-year detail as a consultant for the Central Florida hub. The training I received at CMD is directly correlated with my job. As a result of taking this course, I gained awareness of things that I had been doing in the past that were not helpful to the process. The attributes I have are now enhanced. I recognized that I recorded too small and spoke too quickly and I'm more aware of the benefits of a structured process."

Marcia L. Payne, Flight Standards Service, AFS-500, Herndon, VA, Manager of the Flight Standards Training Division manages all training for the Flight Standards Service. This includes design, development, delivery, and evaluation of technical and management training. Flight Standards (FS) has a solid ongoing relationship with CMD to help FS achieve its training goals.

"Since I joined the FAA in 1990, I've been involved with CMD. Within the last year AFS-500 established a relationship with CMD to provide lodging, meals, classrooms, and in some cases, instructor support for several training requirements. CMD and AFS-500 teamed to provide the Flight Standards Foundation for Principle Inspector training and Flight Standards On-the-Job Training Techniques course for our inspector workforce," said Ms. Payne.

Marcia also has personally benefited. "I've attended numerous CMD management and leadership courses and have benefited particularly from the introspection that many of the leadership courses encourage."

"If there's one thing that I'd like for CMD to never change, it's their 'can do' attitude. They understand their role and responsibilities and consistently meet or exceed my expectations for customer service!"

before joining the American Management Association. He also was a visiting professor at Yale University. "My favorite course to teach at CMD is *Systems Thinking* because I enjoy seeing people develop a different way of seeing their problems and arriving at new and innovative solutions," says Bob.

If you want to be entertained while learning, you should be a student in one of Irving Abel's classes. He has an insuppressible sense of humor. Before becoming the Division Chief of Structure Research for NASA, Irv was a

trainer in the apprentice department for technicians. He spent his last 10 years with NASA as a member of Senior Executive Services before joining the CMD teaching staff in 1998.

In addition to her flair for writing, Pat Coley Ford brings energy and passion to the classroom along with a background in media, public relations and training. Pat was employed at CBS's headquarters in New York and was president and owner of her own public relations firm for eight years in Detroit before coming to CMD.

Mickey Mouse is a CMD instructor

too. What did you say? Yes, Rick Zani is a former trainer at Disney University in Orlando. Now he trains CMD students, using many of training techniques (including a strong sense of humor) that he used as an instructor at Disney University and at General Electric. Rick is a former Vice President for Business Practices for a major Wall Street firm. ✈

Center for Management Development
For additional information, visit their website at www.cmd.faa.gov or call 386-446-7131.